## Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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## **Attorney General Gets Nationwide Relief for Apartment Seekers with Disabilities**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 28, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the settlement of a housing discrimination lawsuit against AIMCO Properties, LP and AIMCO Los Arboles, LP (AIMCO), resolving allegations that their Chandler property refused to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. AIMCO is the largest owner and operator of apartment communities in the United States.

According to court documents, in March 2006, AIMCO denied the application of James Hayes, a prospective tenant who relies on Social Security disability income. AIMCO denied the application based on Hayes' inability to meet the community's income requirements. While Hayes' parents were willing to co-sign for an apartment, AIMCO management refused this offer based on their policy of only allowing full-time students to use co-signers to qualify for apartments.

The Arizona Fair Housing Act requires housing providers who operate apartment complexes to make reasonable accommodations in their rules, policies or practices when necessary to allow a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy housing.

Under the terms of the settlement, in the form of a consent decree, AIMCO will adopt a nationwide policy that allows a qualified applicant or tenant to use a co-signer when, because of disability, the applicant or tenant cannot meet the financial qualification criteria.

"No Arizonan should be refused housing, especially when they can demonstrate the means to pay for that housing," Goddard said. "AIMCO's adoption of a nationwide policy is groundbreaking and opens doors for people with disabilities who previously could not qualify for housing at AIMCO's properties."

The settlement also requires AIMCO to pay Hayes monetary compensation, as well as the costs of the Attorney General's Office to monitor compliance with this settlement for two years.

The policy will apply at all AIMCO residential rental properties in Arizona and throughout the country and will be reflected in the company's operating manual and resident selection criteria used at conventional, non-government subsidized residential rental properties. The company also agreed to include the revision in its online training used by all AIMCO residential rental properties throughout the U.S. The settlement requires AIMCO management entities to provide training regarding the new fair housing curriculum to all supervisors, managers and employees who accept inquiries from prospective tenants and residents at AIMCO properties.

AIMCO owns and/or manages a real estate portfolio of approximately 1,256 apartment communities containing 216,413 apartment units located in 46 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The Arizona Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability, race, color, religion, sex, familial status or national origin. If you believe you are a victim of discrimination, please contact the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, in Phoenix at 602-542-5263 or in Tucson at 520-628-6500. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 32 satellite offices throughout Arizona with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at <a href="https://www.azag.gov">www.azag.gov</a>.

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